AKIRA 3™

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

EPIC COMICS® $3.50 • $4.75 CAN. • VOL. 1, NO. 3

Published monthly by EPIC COMICS.
A New World Company
Office of Publication:
387 Park Avenue South,
New York, NY 10016

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 3

NUMBER 41!

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends—teenaged delinquents from the local vocational school—have made an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the old site and found far more than they expected. In an area said to be totally deserted, they encounter a strange, wizen-faced child, known only as **Number 26**. He is terrified of something and is possessed of extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

Kaneda's gang find themselves in serious trouble with the authorities following the incident, and they learn, to their surprise, that the "police" they encountered after the accident were not normal officers at all, but part of some secret concern. Moreover, **Tetsuo**, who they believed had been taken to a hospital, has disappeared.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** brazenly attempts to pick up **Kay**, a strange girl who catches his fancy. **Kay**, however, is not interested. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance organization, dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

During the mayhem that ensues, both the delinquents and

Kaneda Tetsuo Kay Ryu

the resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26**, and again he uses his powers, to catastrophic effect. Both groups are scattered, but first **Ryu** and then **Kaneda** re-encounter **Number 26**. **Ryu** attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo**.

As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene, armed and ready.

During the resulting firefight, **Kaneda** is separated from **Ryu** and **Number 26**, whom the soldiers are determined to recapture alive. **Kay** saves **Kaneda's** life, but **Ryu** and **Number 26** are cornered, and **Number 26** becomes increasingly ill, exhibiting all the symptoms of drug withdrawal. **Kaneda** returns the favor he owes the resistance fighters by stealing a truck and heading back into the heart of the melee to save **Ryu** and **Number 26**.

That is when the mysterious **Colonel** in charge of the entire covert operation puts in an appearance, bringing forward his secret weapon—**Number 27**, a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru**.

Masaru astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi**. **Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira**.

Kaneda provokes a crisis by pretending to be on the verge of killing **Takashi**, and **Takashi** responds to the stress this causes by telekinetic upheavals that virtually destroy the entire

Takashi **The Colonel** **Masaru** **Yamagata**

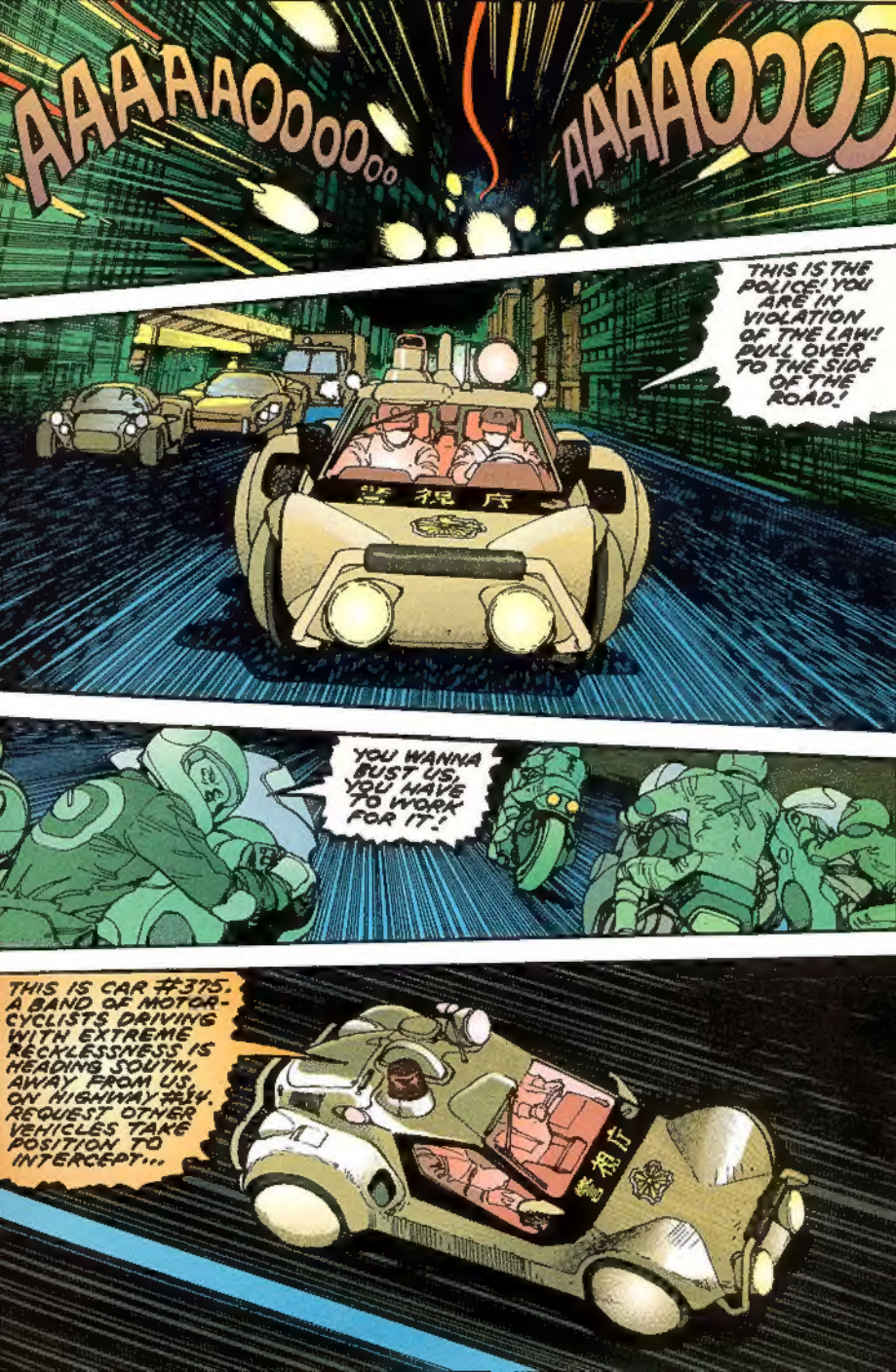
area. During the course of the cataclysm, **Kaneda** is again separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi**, who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

The next day, **Tetsuo** reappears in school, seemingly little the worse for his experiences. However, during the course of his treatment, it has come to the attention of **the Colonel** and his followers that **Tetsuo** has great psychic potential and would be a valuable asset to them.

Kaneda talks his girlfriend—who works in the school infirmary and keeps his entire band of delinquents supplied with drugs—into analyzing the drug intended for **Takashi**, and she tells him that it is similar in substance to what he and his friends take, but unbelieveably concentrated and powerful.

Eager for action, **Kaneda**, **Tetsuo** and their gang head out for a rumble with their chief rivals—the vicious **Clown** gang.

Kaneda's Girl Friend | **Government Soldier** | **Harukiya Bartender** | **Resistance Agent**


AAAAAOOOOOO
AAAAOOOO
THIS IS THE POLICE! YOU ARE IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW! PULL OVER TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD!
警視庁
YOU WANNA BUST US, YOU HAVE TO WORK FOR IT!
THIS IS CAR #375. A BAND OF MOTORCYCLISTS DRIVING WITH EXTREME RECKLESSNESS IS HEADING SOUTH, AWAY FROM US, ON HIGHWAY #14. REQUEST OTHER VEHICLES TAKE POSITION TO INTERCEPT...
警視庁

EVERYBODY SPLIT UP!!
RIGHT!!
LITTLE PUNKS!
NOW!!
!
SKREEE
SKREEECH

DRRRRRN
HEH-HEH-HEH... THIS IS GREAT!
HUNH?
ZZOOOOOOZZ
ZZOOOOOZZ
DRRR
WHO ARE YOU GUYS?! WHAT ARE YOU DRESSED UP FOR?
RRRRRRN
CHIK
SACK
CHUNK

VVVVVV
VRRRRR
THUK
GOT HIM!!
SKREET
!
SWUSH
THOK
KRAK
WHAT'SAMATTER, KID, DIDN'T ANYBODY EVER TELL YOU IT'S BAD MANNERS TO GO PLAYIN' ON SOMEONE ELSE'S TURF?

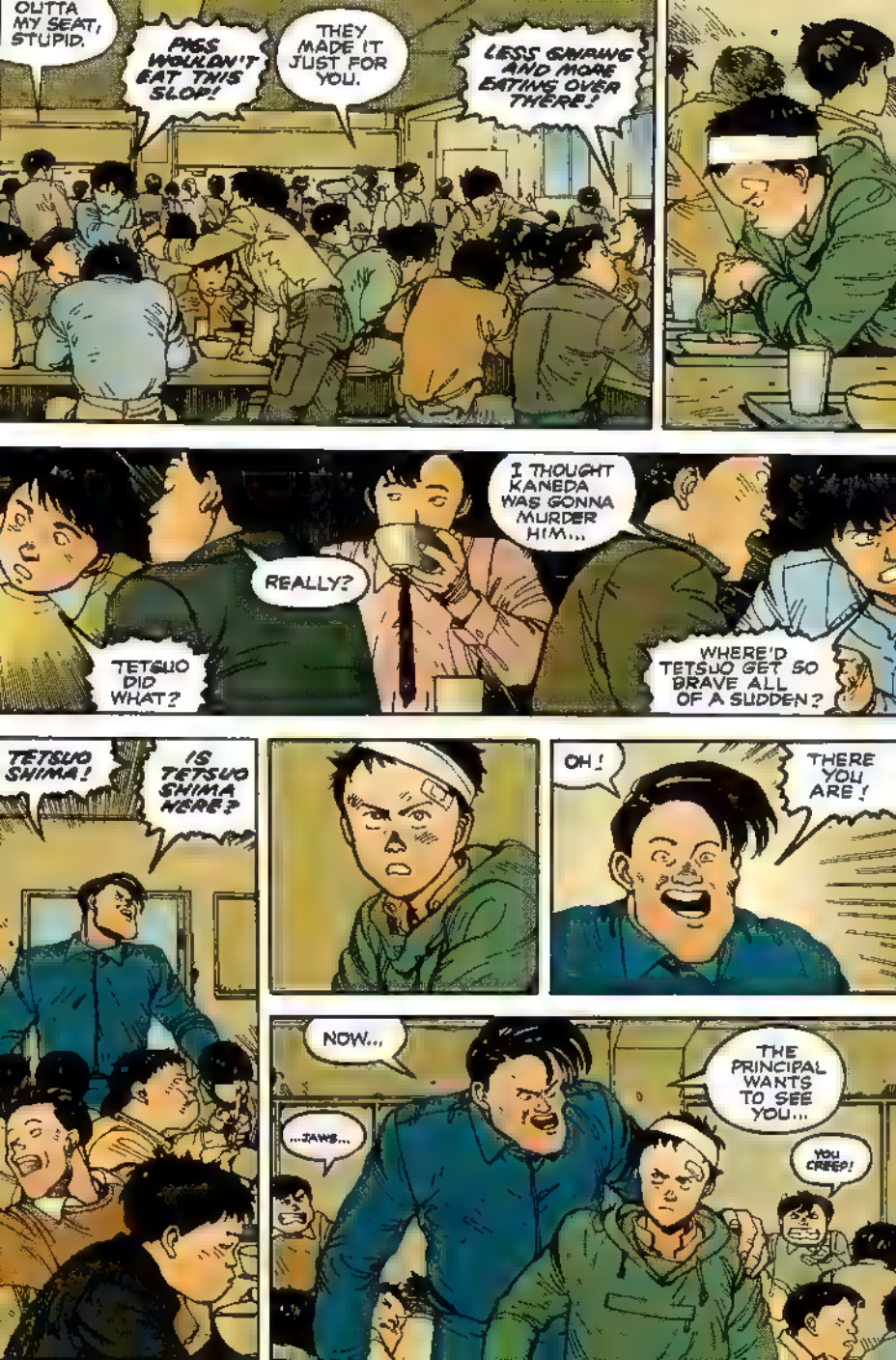
SUCK!
WOMM
HOLD IT!!
DRRRRRN
HERE COME THE REST OF THEM!
MOVE IT!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
TETSUO!!
THAT WAS THE CLOWN GANG!!
?
!

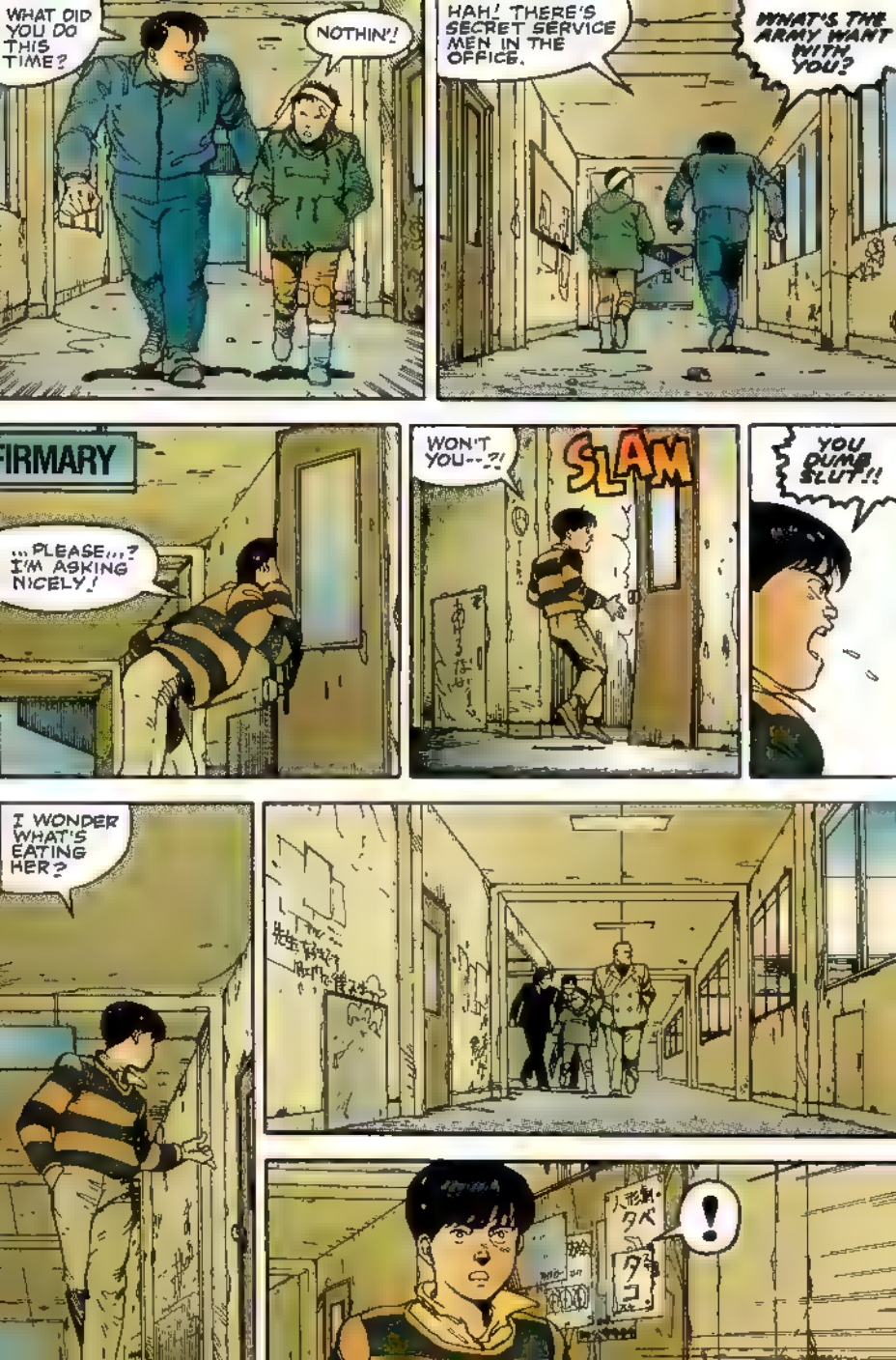
YOU--!!!
THAK
KSSHH
VVVRRRNN
FOLLOW 'EM!!
GET THOSE GUYS!!
VVVRRRNN
YOU...
...YOU'RE A DEAD MAN, SCUMBAG.

WHAM
SMUSH
WHY'D YOU COME BACK?
WE LOST THEM.
VVVRRRN
KRUK
KNOCK IT OFF. HE'S HAD ENOUGH.
NOT WHILE HE'S STILL BREATHING!
ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL HIM?!
YESSS!!!

BAP
I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU.
SAY WHAT?!
I SAID I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU, KANEDA, YOU GOT THAT?

SHSK
THAM
COLONEL!
YOU NEEDN'T GO IN PERSON, SIR! WAIT IN THE CAR, AND WE'LL... I'LL--
--COLONEL!!
HRP


OUTTA MY SEAT, STUPID.
PIGS WOULDN'T EAT THIS SLOP!
THEY MADE IT JUST FOR YOU.
LESS GAMING AND MORE EATING OVER THERE!
I THOUGHT KANEDA WAS GONNA MURDER HIM...
REALLY?
TETSUO DID WHAT?
WHERE'D TETSUO GET SO BRAVE ALL OF A SUDDEN?
TETSUO SHIMA!
IS TETSUO SHIMA HERE?
OH!
THERE YOU ARE!
NOW...
...JAWS...
THE PRINCIPAL WANTS TO SEE YOU...
YOU CREEP!


WHAT DID YOU DO THIS TIME?
NOTHIN'!
HAH! THERE'S SECRET SERVICE MEN IN THE OFFICE.
WHAT'S THE ARMY WANT WITH YOU?
FIRMARY
...PLEASE...? I'M ASKING NICELY!
WON'T YOU--?!
SLAM
YOU DUMB SLUT!!
I WONDER WHAT'S EATING HER?
!

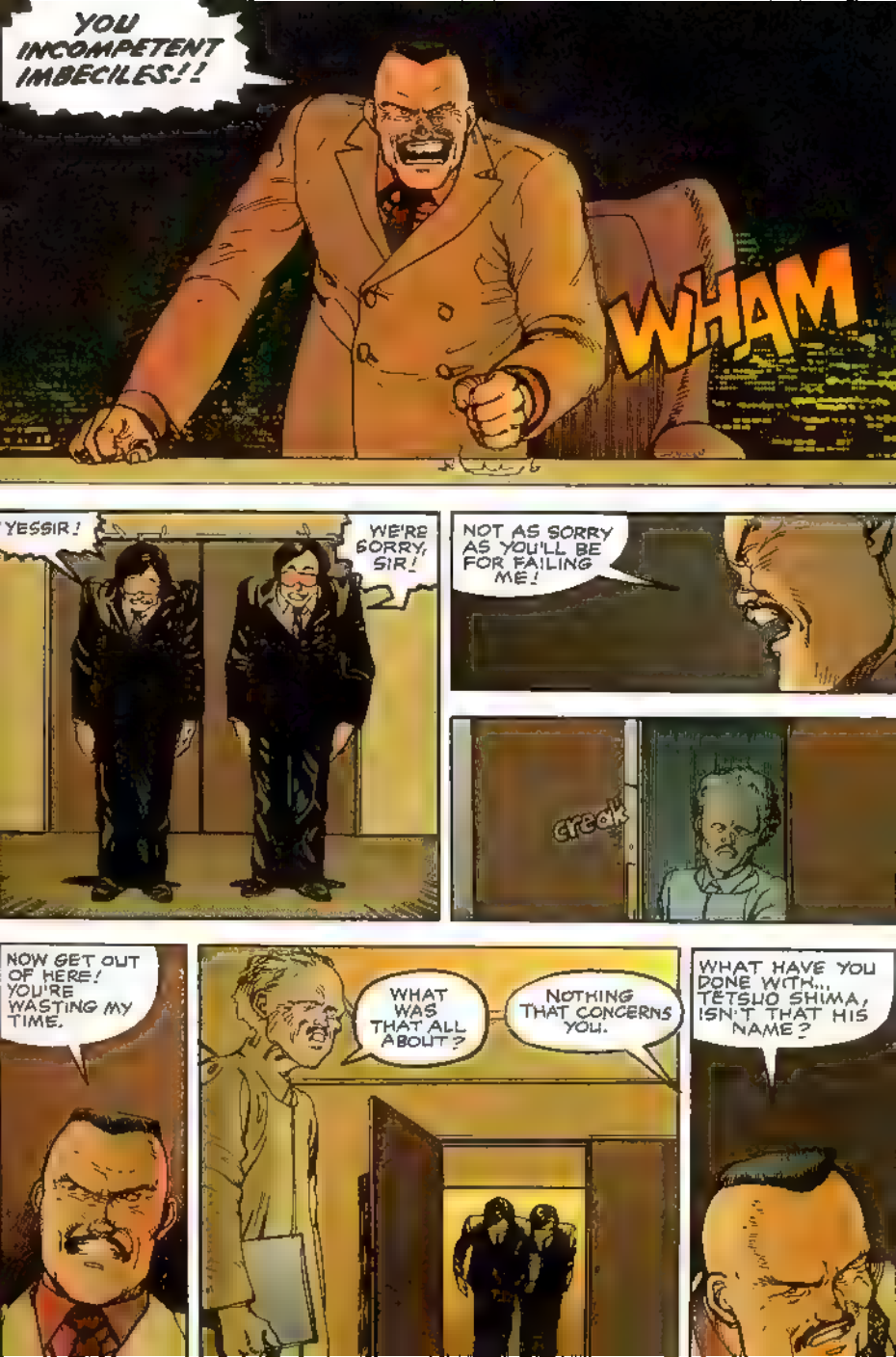
HEY! I WAS GONNA GO TO THE HOSPITAL LIKE YOU PEOPLE TOLD ME... WHAT'S THE MATTER? DON'T YOU TRUST ME?
EH...?
YOU!!
THAM
AFTER HIM!!
DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!
SIR...?
YOU WANT US TO...?
KANEDA?
WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE?

!
KRESH
BLAST IT...
WHUD
BRING HIM BACK! DON'T FAIL ME!!
SAYONARA, SUCKERS!!
VOOF

DRRRRRN
SKREEEEE
!
EEYII..!
HONDA
SHOEI
VVVRRRNN
MISERABLE LITTLE UPSTART...

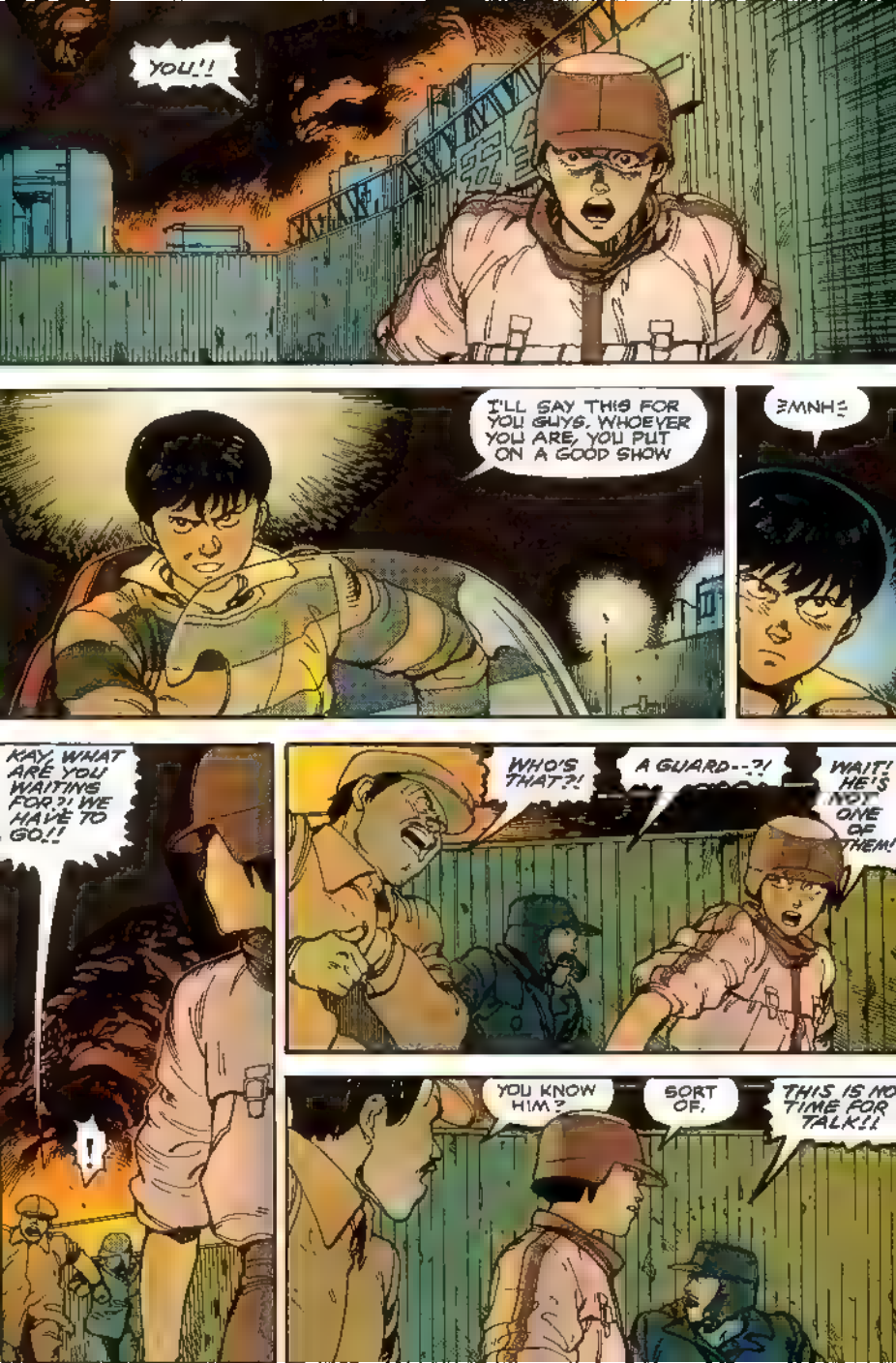
THE PILL...?
PRECISELY. FOR WHATEVER REASON, THE OPPOSITION HAS GONE TO SOME LENGTHS TRYING TO RECOVER IT, RYU.
THAT KID MADE OFF WITH IT IN ALL THE CONFUSION.
DO YOU KNOW HIS IDENTITY?
NO. HE DIDN'T SEEM WORTH BOTHERING WITH AT THE TIME NEZU.
IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT WE LOCATE HIM.
BUT--!
...BEFORE THE OTHER SIDE DOES

AND WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE NEW OLYMPIC STADIUM THEY'RE BUILDING IN THE OLD CITY, RYU?
MY SOURCES INDICATE THAT SITE WILL BECOME A SECRET MILITARY INSTALLATION AFTER THE GAMES...
..CONSTRUCTION IS ALREADY UNDERWAY, NEZU.
YES, WE'VE ALREADY GIVEN THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES ENOUGH PROMPTING. ALL WE NEED NOW IS SOMETHING TO START THE PUBLIC OUTCRY.
YOU MEAN AN INCIDENT, NEZU?
YES. A MAJOR INCIDENT!
RRRRR
!
SITE OF THE 2031 TOKYO OLYMPICS
NO UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES ALLOWED
HAH!

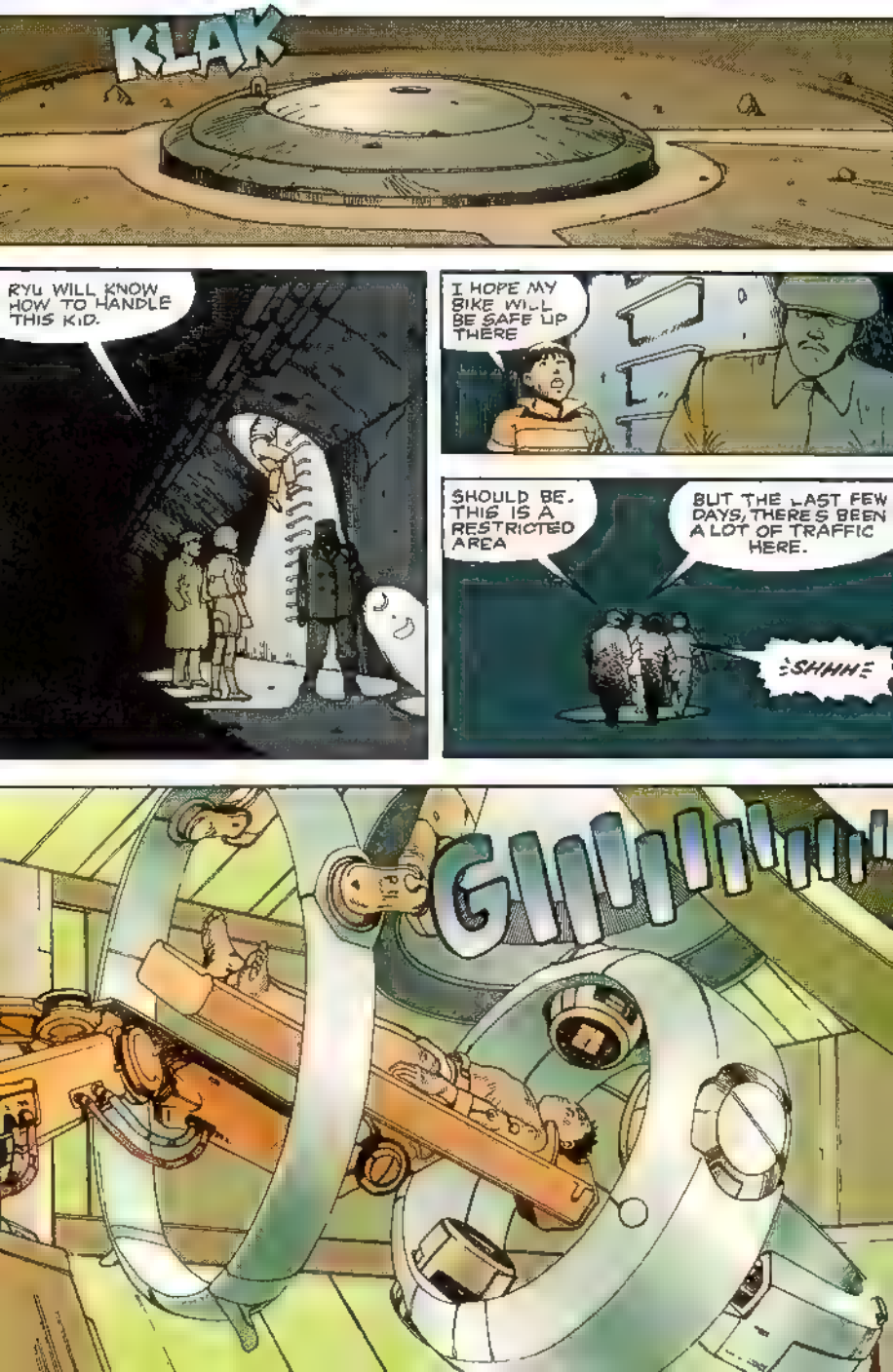

YOU INCOMPETENT IMBECILES!!
WHAM
YESSIR!
WE'RE SORRY, SIR!
NOT AS SORRY AS YOU'LL BE FOR FAILING ME!
creak
NOW GET OUT OF HERE! YOU'RE WASTING MY TIME.
WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
NOTHING THAT CONCERNS YOU.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH... TETSUO SHIMA, ISN'T THAT HIS NAME?

I'VE GIVEN HIM A SEDATIVE TOMORROW, WHEN HE WAKES UP, WE CAN BEGIN INTENSIVE EXAMINATIONS.
WHEN MAY I EXPECT YOUR REPORT?
IT WILL TAKE ABOUT THREE WEEKS TO COMPILE ALL THE DATA.
!
KROOM
WHAT...?!
IT CAME FROM THE OLD CITY.
COULD IT HAVE BEEN THE OLYMPIC SITE?

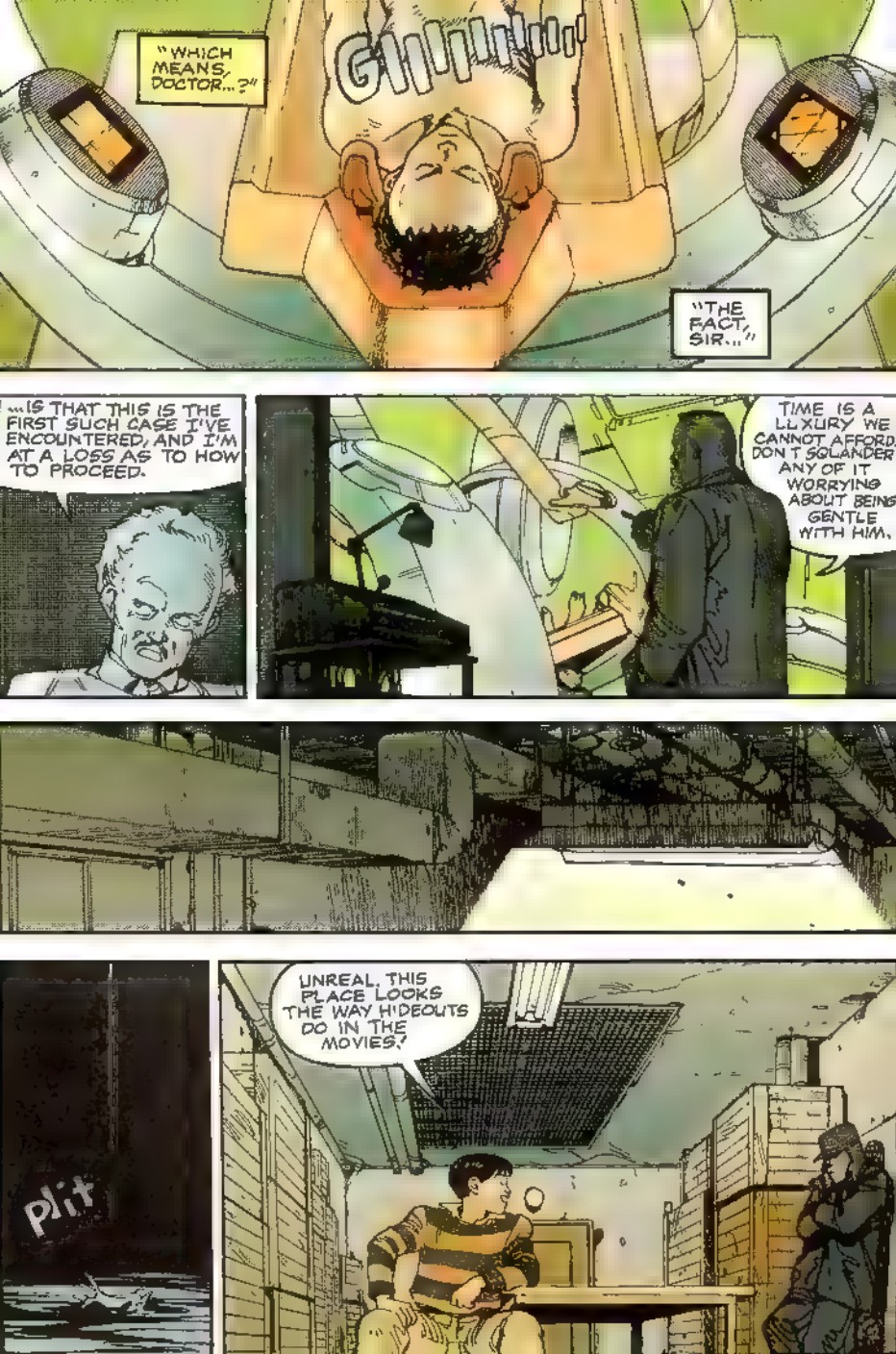
WHUUUUUUUUUUUU
AAIEE!!
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT!
AUGH!
安全第一
西門
進入注意
'30 東京オリンピック
建設現場工事中
OH--!
I THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE YOUR DOING.


YOU!!
I'LL SAY THIS FOR YOU GUYS, WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU PUT ON A GOOD SHOW
ƎMNH::
KAY, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?! WE HAVE TO GO!!
!
WHO'S THAT?!
A GUARD--?!
WAIT! HE'S NOT ONE OF THEM!
YOU KNOW HIM?
SORT OF.
THIS IS NO TIME FOR TALK!!

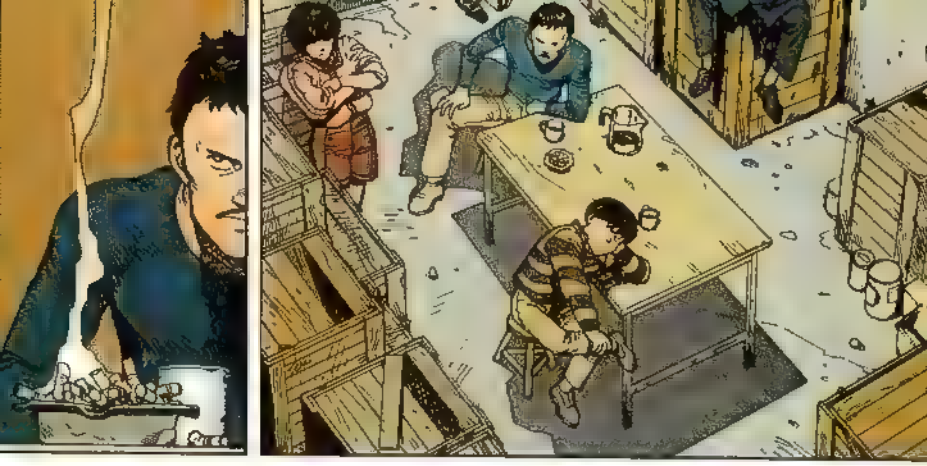
YOU RE RIGHT. LET'S GO.
NOT SO FAST!
HE CAN IDENTIFY US.
I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE HIM ALONE.
NO WAY, I'M NOT GETTIN' LEFT BEHIND THIS TIME.
GET OUT OF HERE!!
WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE HIM WITH US.
WHAT?
NO!!
HEH-HEH-HEH!
BUT THE BIKE STAYS HERE!
HEY!!
ARE YOU CRAZY?
YEAH!
YOU CAN'T ASK ME TO ABANDON MY BIKE!


KLAK
RYU WILL KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THIS KID.
I HOPE MY BIKE WILL BE SAFE UP THERE
SHOULD BE. THIS IS A RESTRICTED AREA
BUT THE LAST FEW DAYS, THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF TRAFFIC HERE.
SHHHH
GIIIIIIIIIII

SOME TIME DURING THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, HE TOOK SOME KIND OF ARTIFICIAL STIMULANT, COLONEL.
STIMULANT?
A DRUG... UPPERS. PEP PILLS.
THEY'RE CURRENTLY ENJOYING A GREAT VOGUE AMONG CERTAIN OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION
THIS ONE SEEMS TO BE A SIMPLE COMBINATION OF OVER-THE-COUNTER INGREDIENTS.
ANY REASONABLY SKILLED PHARMACIST COULD SYNTHESIZE IT.
IT'S NOT A HALLUCINOGEN, BUT IT MAY BE ADDICTIVE.
I BELIEVE IT ACCOUNTS FOR THE ALTERATION OF THE BRAIN WAVE PATTERN.


"WHICH MEANS, DOCTOR...?"
GIIIIIIII
"THE FACT, SIR..."
...IS THAT THIS IS THE FIRST SUCH CASE I'VE ENCOUNTERED, AND I'M AT A LOSS AS TO HOW TO PROCEED.
TIME IS A LUXURY WE CANNOT AFFORD. DON'T SQUANDER ANY OF IT WORRYING ABOUT BEING GENTLE WITH HIM.
plit
UNREAL. THIS PLACE LOOKS THE WAY H'IDEOUTS DO IN THE MOVIES.

YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME IMMEDIATELY, KAY!
WE THOUGHT OUR REPORT TOOK PRECEDENCE.
ARE YOU SURE IT'S HIM?
DEFINITELY.
HERE?!
thum-thum-thum-thum
CRAB--!
BAM
AH...AH... FANCY MEETING YOU HERE... HEH.
HMPF
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE. I WANTED TO THANK YOU.
.....
HUNH?
Slam
THANK...?



SO... THAT PILL... HAVE YOU STILL GOT IT?

THE PILL? THAT PILL?

AH... NO. I THREW IT AWAY, INTO THE CANAL

OH, YOU DID, HUNH? WELL, YOU LISTEN TO ME.

WE'RE PART OF AN UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION, AND...

DON'T, RYUSAKU! WE CAN'T TRUST--!
QUIET!!

LOOK, I'M SORRY I PUT IT INTO MY POCKET, BUT THEN I FELL INTO THE CANAL.
SPLASH! ...REMEMBER?
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.
THE WAY THAT WEIRD GUY, TAKASHI, KEPT GOING ON ABOUT IT, I HAD TO STEAL IT FROM HIM.
BUT WHAT WAS IT?
RYU, YOU'RE WASTING VALUABLE TIME!
KAY'S RIGHT. IT'S NOT LIKE YOU!
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW, DO YOU?
I KEEP WORRYING ABOUT MY BIKE.
COULDN'T SOMEONE GO AND GET IT?
A CORPSE--HIS CORPSE--COULD TELL US AS MUCH AS THIS KID WILL!
I COULD GET YOU THE TRUTH. GIVE ME A HALF HOUR WITH HIM!
IT'S NOT THAT URGENT... YET. LET'S REMEMBER WHICH SIDE WE'RE ON.
HUH.
POOR BIKE, ALL ALONE IN THE DARK. DON'T CRY. MY POOR LITTLE BIKE

GI
WHAT LEVEL IS HE ON?
I PUT HIM ON LEVEL SEVEN, DOCTOR.
HOW DID HE RESPOND?
THERE WAS A SLIGHT REACTION, BUT NO AWAKENING.
BRING HIM UP TO LEVEL TEN.
BUT, SIR--!
DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!

SLAM
SIR... ABOUT THE ACCIDENT AT THE OLYMPIC SITE...
"ACCIDENT"...?
THAT'S WHAT THE NEWS MEDIA ARE CALLING IT, SIR.
HAVE YOU SEEN ANY OF THE TELEVISION COVERAGE?
EVERY STATION HAS CARRIED A REPORT...
... ABOUT THE MILITARY'S COVERT INVOLVEMENT WITH THE STADIUM.
THAT WAS NO ACCIDENT!
THEY WERE ALL CAREFULLY BRIEFED --BY SOMEONE WITH ACCESS TO THE MOST TOP SECRET INFORMATION. BE VIGILANT!
YESSIR!
IF YOU GET ANY LEADS ON OUR TRAITOR, REPORT TO ME AT ONCE.
YES, COLONEL!

Woo Wooooooooo
choo choo choo
Wooooooooo

FEELING BETTER, TAKASHI?
I'M FINE, SIR
DID YOU...BRING ME ANYTHING?
NOT TODAY.
I WANT TO WATCH TELEVISION.
YOU HAVE MY PERMISSION. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOUR SET, IS THERE?
BUT I WANT TO WATCH MOVIES ABOUT AIRPLANES AND DOGFIGHTING
NO. NOTHING THAT WILL EXCITE YOU.
AND WHERE IS MASARU?

TELL ME, MASARU... IS KIYOKO WELL?
YES, SIR. SHE JUST WOKE UP.
I HAD A DREAM.
TELL ME ABOUT IT.
I DREAMED OF AKIRA

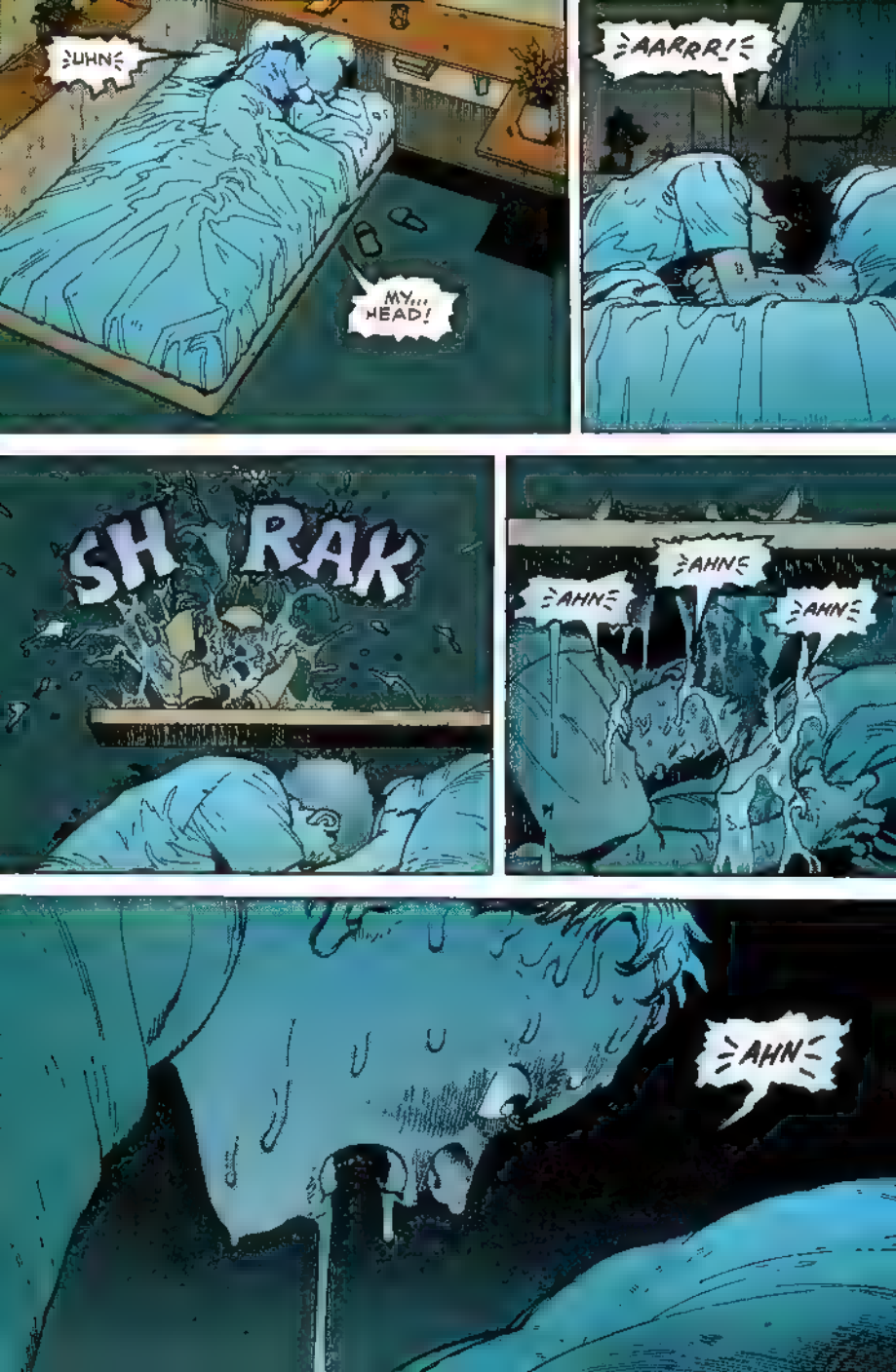
AKIRA!
HE'LL AWAKEN SOON.
WHAT?! IS THIS THE TRUTH?!
WHEN? WHEN?!?
SOON...
3

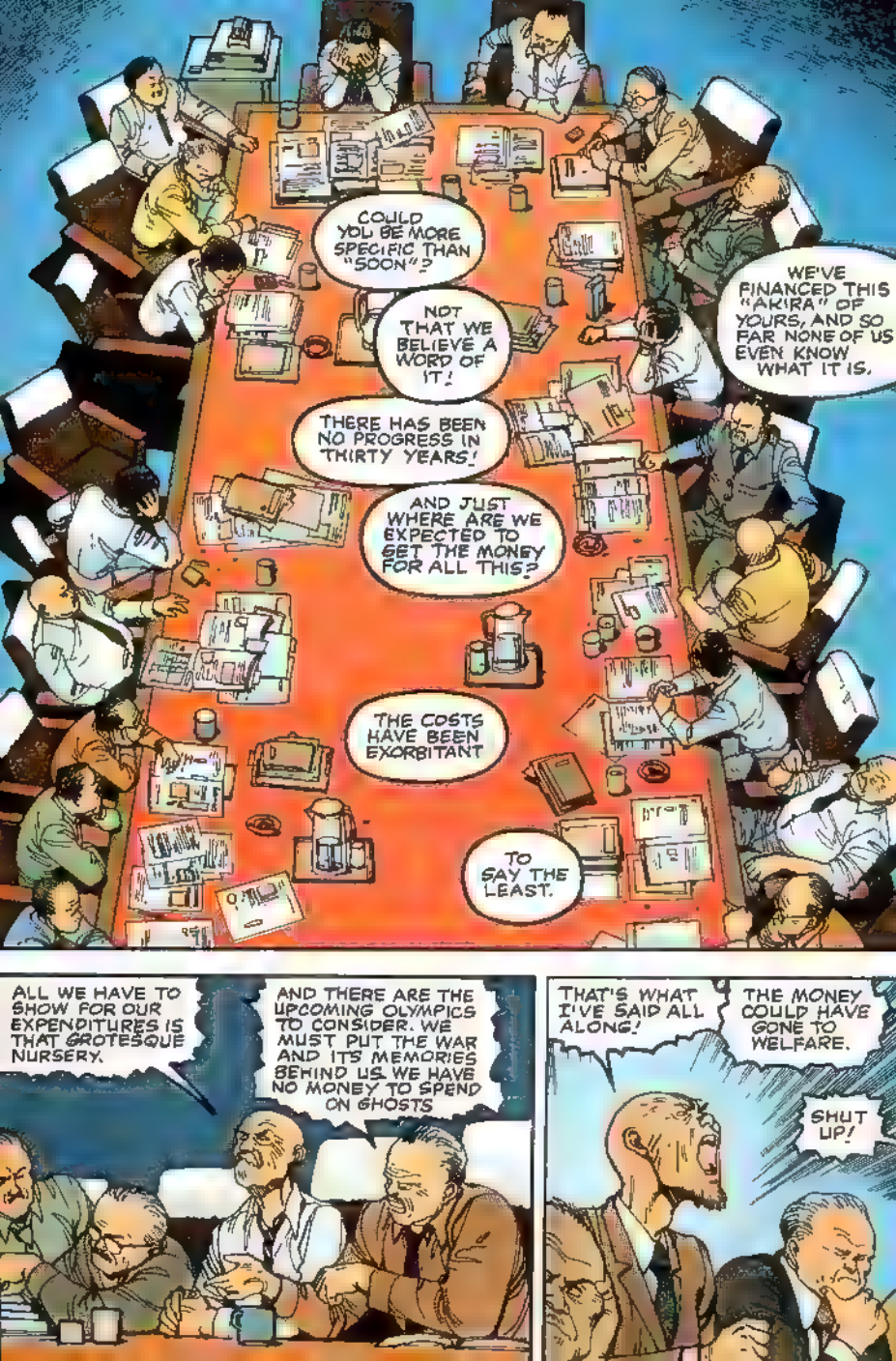
THIS IS AN EMERGENCY! CODE RED!!
WHO--?
ALERT ALL PERSONNEL!!
BLAST THE LUCK! THIS SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED SO SOON!
I EXPECTED TO HAVE MORE TIME!
I THOUGHT HE WAS GONNA WORK ME OVER.
IN HERE
klik
IS THIS YOUR ROOM?
YES.

HMMMM.
NOT VERY GLAMOROUS FOR SOMEONE WHO LEADS SUCH AN EXCITING LIFE.
IF ANYTHING IMPORTANT COMES UP, YOU CAN CALL OUT ON THIS INTERCOM.
HUNH?
YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT STAYING?
I COULD NEVER LOOK MY DEAR OLD MOTHER IN THE EYE AGAIN IF I DID.
WAIT A SECOND!
SLAM
LEMME OUTTA HERE!
BAM BAM
KKEEEEEE
!

EEYAAAAA!!
HEY, ARE YOU OKAY OUT THERE?!
KRASH
KKEEEEEEEEE
YIKES!!
EEEEEEEEEEE

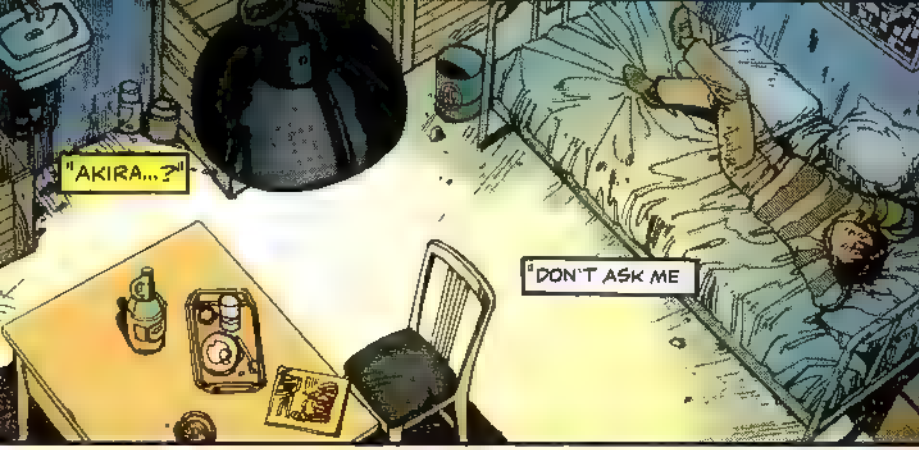
IT'S ME...! B-BURNING! WHAT...?!
...A...KI...RA...
KEEEEEN
YAAAA!
ULP!
IT VANISHED!
WHAT HAPPENED THERE?!
WHAT ? WHAT..?

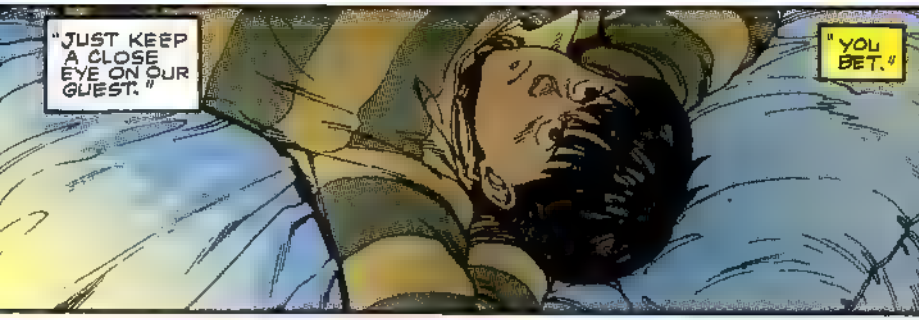

UHN
MY... HEAD!
AARRR!
SH RAK
AHN
AHN
AHN
AHN

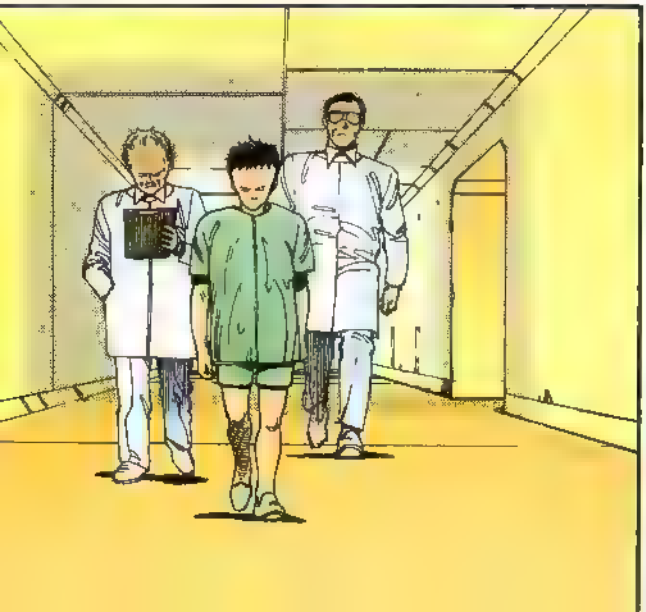

COULD YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC THAN "SOON"?
NOT THAT WE BELIEVE A WORD OF IT!
WE'VE FINANCED THIS "AKIRA" OF YOURS, AND SO FAR NONE OF US EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS.
THERE HAS BEEN NO PROGRESS IN THIRTY YEARS!
AND JUST WHERE ARE WE EXPECTED TO GET THE MONEY FOR ALL THIS?
THE COSTS HAVE BEEN EXORBITANT
TO SAY THE LEAST.
ALL WE HAVE TO SHOW FOR OUR EXPENDITURES IS THAT GROTESQUE NURSERY.
AND THERE ARE THE UPCOMING OLYMPICS TO CONSIDER. WE MUST PUT THE WAR AND ITS MEMORIES BEHIND US. WE HAVE NO MONEY TO SPEND ON GHOSTS
THAT'S WHAT I'VE SAID ALL ALONG!
THE MONEY COULD HAVE GONE TO WELFARE.
SHUT UP!

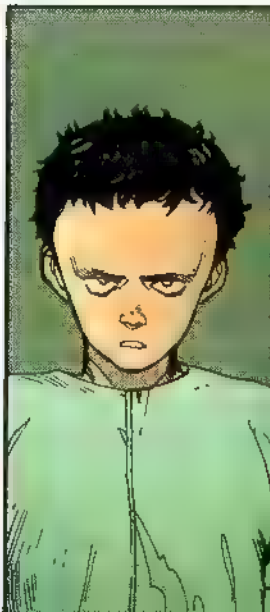
BAM
THIS BICKERING IS POINTLESS!
I DIDN'T SUMMON YOU HERE SO I COULD LISTEN TO YOU ARGUE!
HOWEVER, AS SOME OF YOU ARRIVED AFTER THE BRIEFING...
...AND MAY HAVE MISSED OUT ON VITAL INFORMATION...
...LET ME REPEAT...
...AKIRA WILL ARISE!!
OUR BUDGETARY REQUESTS ARE AS MODEST AS POSSIBLE, GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
TRIM THEM FURTHER BY SO MUCH AS A FRACTION AND I CAN ASSURE YOU TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WILL DIE.
GASP!
GASP!
HESITATE AND WE WILL ONCE AGAIN FIND OURSELVES REBUILDING TOKYO FROM THE RUINS...
..ASSUMING ANY OF US SURVIVE.

AKIRA?!
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID.
NOT YOUR RUN-OF-THE-MILL VISITOR, WAS HE?
IT WAS WEIRD... BIZARRE...
YOU'RE CERTAIN IT WASN'T A HOLOGRAM?
NO... IT WAS A... A PRESENCE. I FELT HIM
COULD IT HAVE BEEN THE KID'S DOING?
I DON'T THINK SO. HE WAS SCARED TOO. IT SEEMED SOME WAY SIMILAR TO TAKASHI'S ENERGY, AND YET... DIFFERENT.
DIFFERENT...?


"AKIRA...?"
"DON'T ASK ME


"JUST KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON OUR GUEST."
"YOU BET."



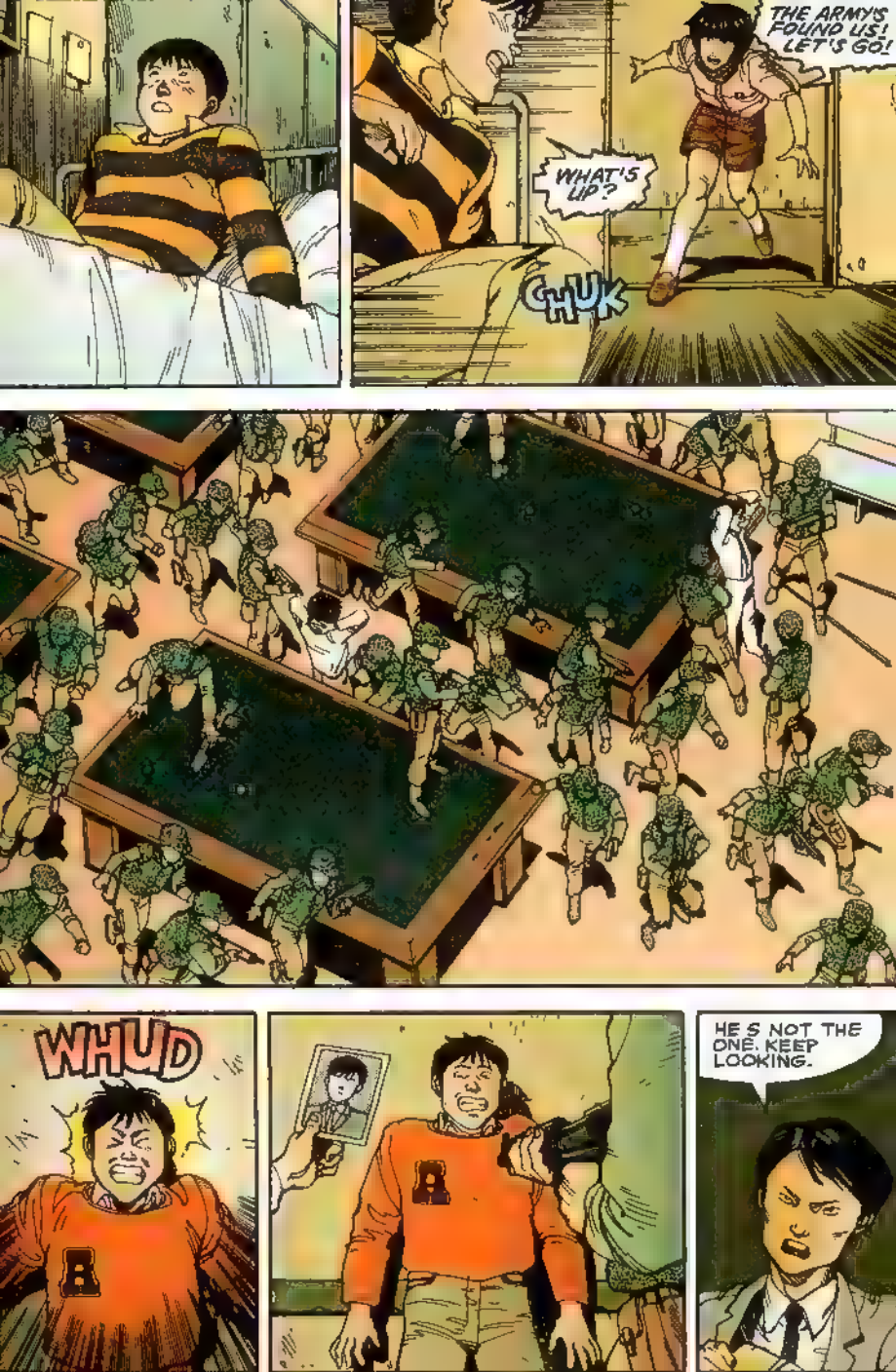


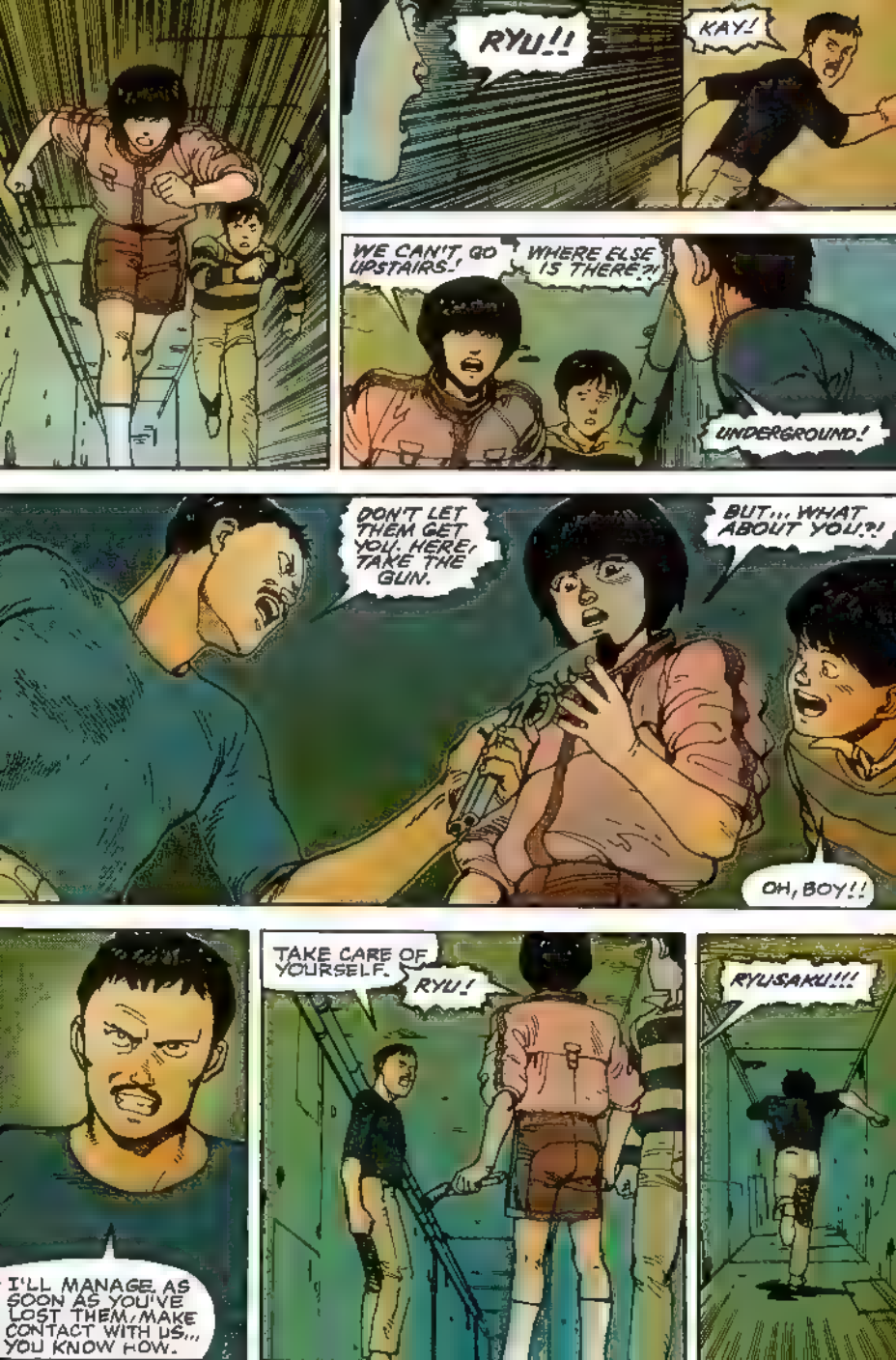
YOU GUYS ARE DOCTORS... CAN'T YOU FIGURE OUT SOME WAY OF CURING MY HEADACHE?
IT WILL BE GONE SOON ENOUGH.
S-SURE...
I HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE THINKING AS IT IS...
...SO DON'T START MESSING WITH MY MIND.
TAMIYA

Billiards

A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER...?
THINK HE'S A SECRET SERVICE BLOODHOUND?
HE'S NOT LISTED IN OUR FILES, BUT MAYBE HE JUST JOINED THEM.
HE'S BEEN HANGING AROUND FOR THE LAST WEEK
KRAAK
?!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
KRASH

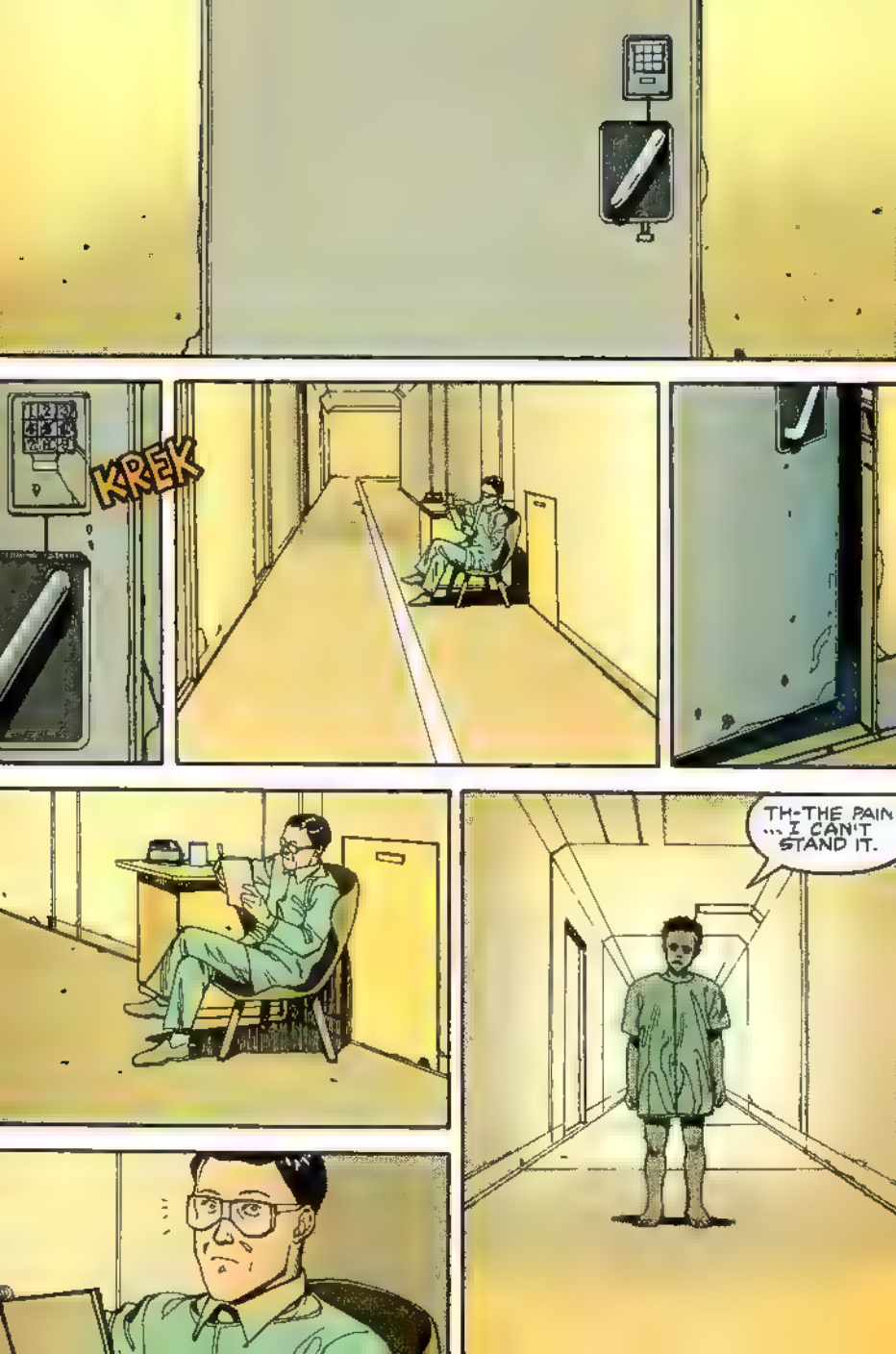
IT'S THE ARMY!!
PUT UP YOUR HANDS!
RESISTANCE IS POINTLESS!
I REPEAT-- PUT UP YOUR HANDS!!
SEAL OFF ALL EXITS!
HOLD IT THERE ARE MORE UPSTAIRS!
HEY!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
ARRRGH!!


THE ARMY'S FOUND US! LET'S GO!
WHAT'S UP?
CHUK
WHUD
HE'S NOT THE ONE. KEEP LOOKING.

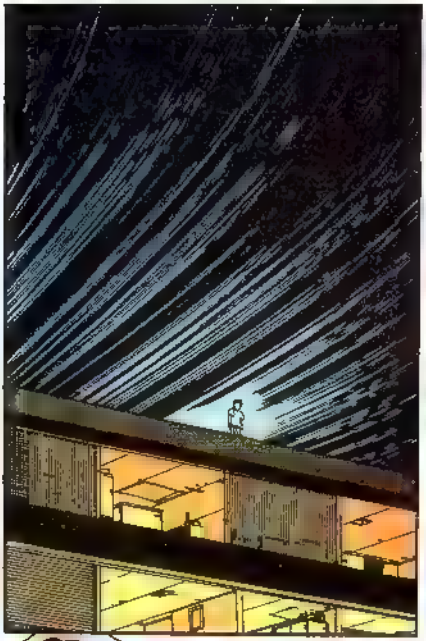

RYU!!
KAY!
WE CAN'T GO UPSTAIRS!
WHERE ELSE IS THERE?!
UNDERGROUND!
DON'T LET THEM GET YOU. HERE, TAKE THE GUN.
BUT... WHAT ABOUT YOU?!
OH, BOY!!
I'LL MANAGE. AS SOON AS YOU'VE LOST THEM, MAKE CONTACT WITH US... YOU KNOW HOW.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.
RYU!
RYUSAKU!!!

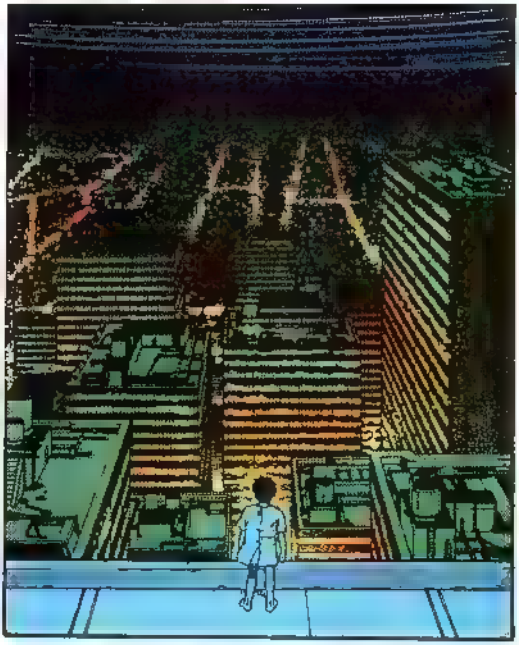
LET'S GO!!
RIGHT!!
THUD
HURRY, HURRY!!
HEY! IT'S DARK DOWN THERE! HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO SEE?
TOKATOKATOKATO
IN THERE!!
klong
WHAM
!
TOK

MOVE!!
THESE DAYS I'M ALWAYS ON THE RUN!
THE SEWERS!
MAYBE. BUT HAVE THE GUARDS COVER ALL EXITS JUST IN CASE.
I'M GOING IN!
!
BARROOOM
WE DID IT!
OOOM
OOOM
OOOM
YOU..
YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME.

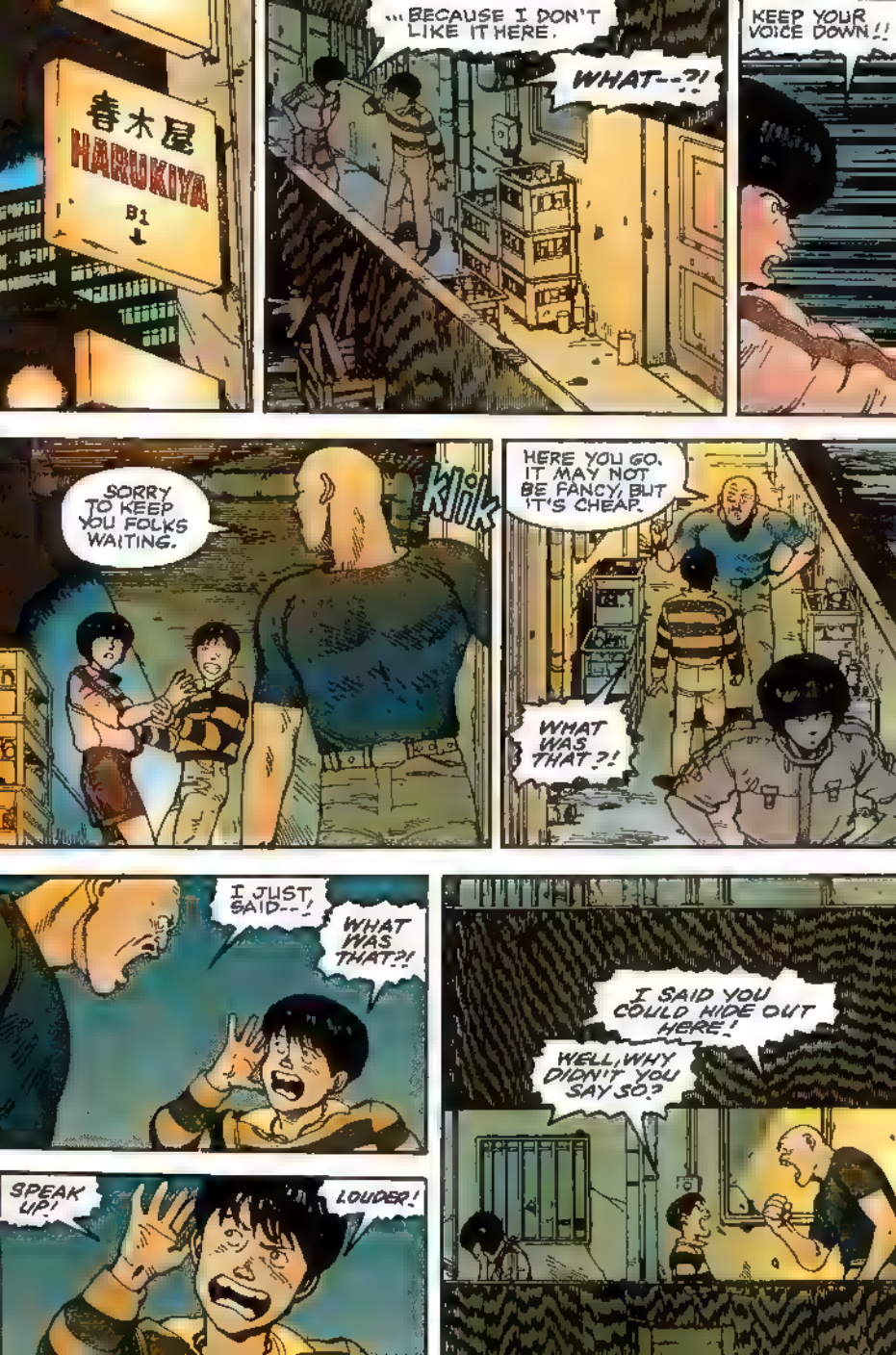

KREK
TH-THE PAIN ... I CAN'T STAND IT.

HOW...
H-HOW DID YOU GET OUT?





OOOH
UUUUU

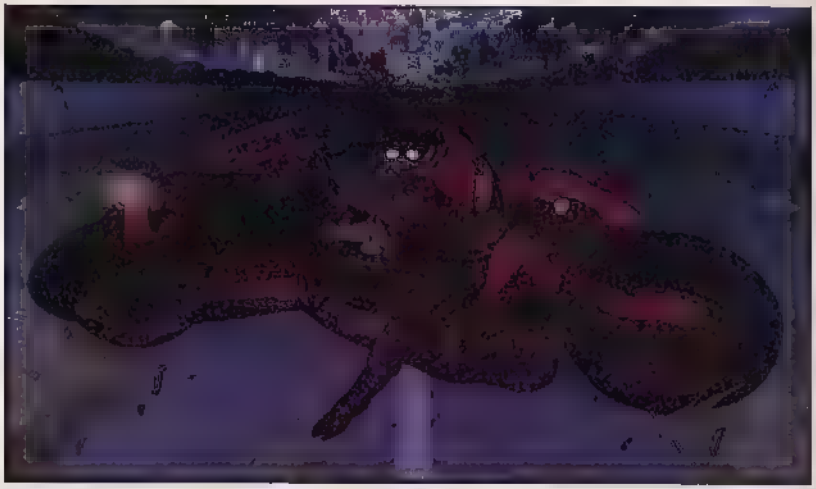

春木屋
HARUKIYA
B1
...BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE IT HERE.
WHAT--?!
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN!!
SORRY TO KEEP YOU FOLKS WAITING.
klik
HERE YOU GO. IT MAY NOT BE FANCY, BUT IT'S CHEAP.
WHAT WAS THAT?!
I JUST SAID--!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
I SAID YOU COULD HIDE OUT HERE!
WELL, WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO?
SPEAK UP!
LOUDER!

pard
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
rruuuuum
PUFF
PUFF

RRRuuuuuuuM
Ruuuuuuuu

YOUR OPINION?
BEYOND ANYTHING I EXPECTED!
FOR HIM TO AWAKEN INTO SUCH POWER IN SO SHORT A SPAN OF TIME...
I BELIEVE #41 IS THE NEXT AVAILABLE DESIGNATION...?
HE MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE SERIES AND ASSIGNED HIS OWN NUMBER.

VRRRN
VRRRN
COME ON. HE'S ALL YOURS.
YOU PUNK! I'M GONNA BEAT YOU...
...TILL YOU'RE BEGGIN' ME TO DIE.
chik
YOU SHOULDA KILLED ME WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE...
...BUT IT'S TOO LATE NOW.



AKIRA

THE ANIMATED MOVIE

Kaneda Tetsuo, and the rest of *Akira*'s large cast have sprung into life and incredible motion. Katsuhiro Otomo has brought his post World War III epic from the comics to full animation in a feature film produced through the partnership of Kodansha Ltd., Mainichi Broadcasting System, Inc., Bandai Co., Ltd., Hakuhodo Incorporated; Toho Co., Ltd.; Laserdisc Corporation; Sumitomo Corporation; and Tokyo Movie Shinsha Co., Ltd.

Otomo at Tokyo's Imperial Hotel for the press conference announcing the production of the film.

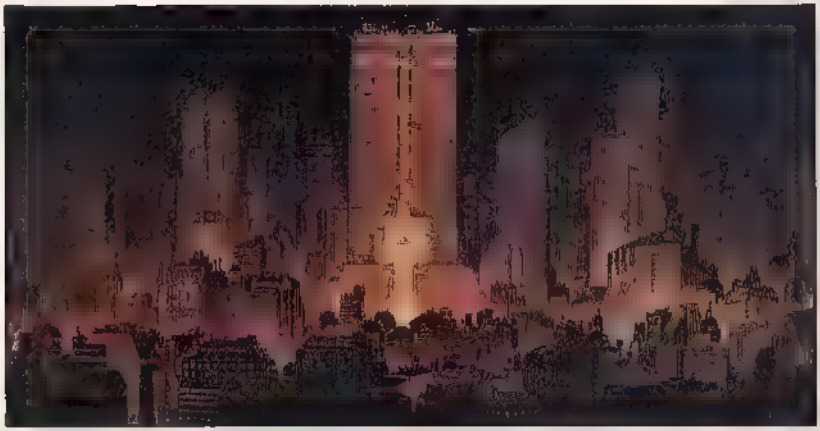
In the United States, when a comic book or comic strip is turned into a film, the original creator's involvement will usually be limited to a consulting role. At times not even that. The final result which appears in theaters or on videotape often bears small resemblance to the creation it was based upon. No one can say that of the film version of *Akira*, which had its premiere in Tokyo on July 16th.

Katsuhiro Otomo has successfully managed the triple feat of handling the story, the screenplay (in cooperation with Izo Hashimoto), and the direction of the movie. In addition, Otomo also did the film's storyboards, taking six months off from his work on the comics feature in order to complete this important phase of production which sets into place the story's visual and narrative flow.

All photos © 1988 MASH•ROOM Co., Ltd. / AKIRA Committee

Can a saga designed for 1800 pages of comics fit into two hours of onscreen time? Otomo has boldly reconstructed the comic's storyline (not yet completed) keeping the same theme, but striving for greater simplicity to allow for full cinematic effect and to avoid the feeling of merely doing a 'digest version' of the comic book. Visually, Otomo admires the fluid quality of the best Disney animation and has generated over 160,000 animation cells (a half hour of TV animation utilizes about 4000 cells) to achieve the results he wanted. An epic approach for an epic in animation.

Above: the animated Takashi, Number 26.
Below: the Laboratory Building rises in the center of the Neo-Tokyo cityscape.



Threads. Slowly intertwining. Coming together. Twisting tighter. The construction site for the coming Olympic games in post World War III Neo-Tokyo is rocked by an explosion, the work of anti-government rebels. In a secret government project controlled by the man known only as the Colonel, a wizen-faced child-woman awakens from a dream. Her dreams are of someone called AKIRA. She dreams he will soon arise. On the streets, the young delinquent, Kaneda, object of government pursuit and rebel scrutiny, finds his authority over the motorcycle gang he leads suddenly challenged. The challenger is his friend, Tetsuo, who, following a mysterious highway accident, seems to be changing. Growing distant. Growing strange. Threads, Twisting, Tighter. Tighter until . . . something must break.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

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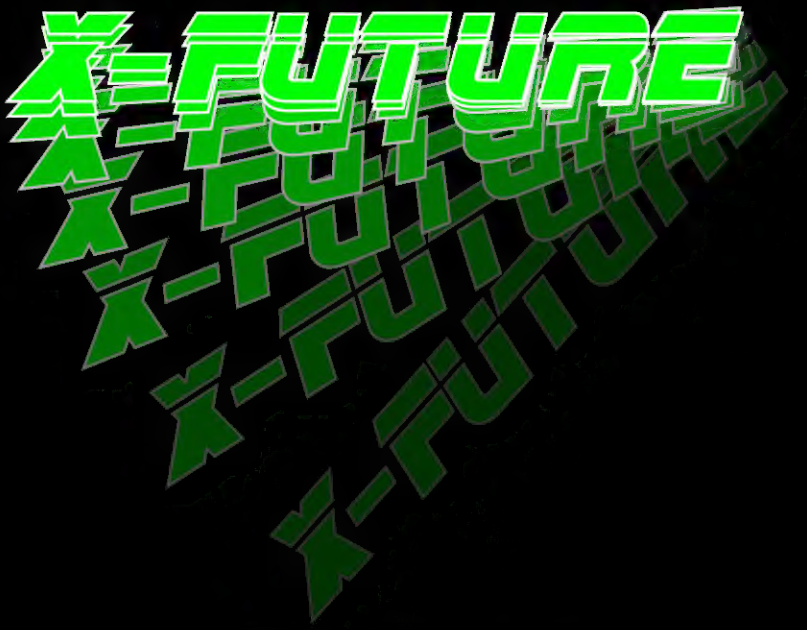

I love um

I buy um

I preserve um

アキラ

アキラ

AKIRA

BY

KATSUHIRO
O T O M O

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